



Indiana State Department of Health

Epidemiology Resource Center

Quick Facts

About...Brucellosis

What is brucellosis?

Brucellosis is a disease caused by a germ. These germs are passed among animals, like sheep, goats, cattle, deer, bison, elk, pigs, and dogs. It is not common in the United States in people or animals, but is very common in other parts of the world.

What are the symptoms of brucellosis in humans?

In humans, brucellosis can cause a range of symptoms that are similar to the flu and may include fever, sweats, headaches, back pains, and physical weakness. Severe infections of the brain or lining of the heart may occur. Brucellosis can also cause long-lasting or chronic symptoms that include fevers that come and go, joint pain, and tiredness.

How is brucellosis spread?

Humans may get the disease by:

- Eating or drinking unpasteurized (raw) dairy products with the germ;
- Breathing in the bacteria in a high risk job; or
- Having skin contact with animals or animal products that have the germ.

How do I know if I have brucellosis?

See a doctor. Be sure to tell your doctor if you have drank unpasteurized (raw) milk or have been around cattle, pigs, goats, or sheep. Your doctor will give you an exam and may order lab tests.

How is brucellosis treated?

Your doctor can give you medicine for this disease.

How is brucellosis prevented?

Do not drink raw milk, or eat cheese or ice cream made from raw milk. If you are not sure that the dairy product is pasteurized, don't eat or drink it. Be extra careful when eating or drinking milk products when you travel to other countries. Hunters and animal herdsman should use rubber gloves when handling the organs of animals. There is no vaccine for humans.

All information presented is intended for public use. For more information, please refer to: <http://www.cdc.gov/brucellosis/>

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